



Scott Spouses Newsletter

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AT&T Makes it Easier For Soldiers to Call From Iraq

If you're thinking about buying a prepaid calling card for a loved one stationed in Iraq, do yourself a favor: Don't buy it at Wal-Mart, a gas station or any other place where calling cards are typically sold.

The reason: Those prepaid cards, which typically offer long-distance for a flat rate of 5 cents a minute or less, are geared for domestic calling. If they're used to make calls from the war zone, there's a good chance the minutes will be drained before you can say, "Operator, please."

Thousands of those calling cards have been bought by people who mistakenly assumed they're suitable for use in Iraq.

The solution? The Global PrePaid Card. The Defense Department has an exclusive contract with AT&T, which developed the card specifically for use by military personnel overseas.

The Global card is sold on U.S. military bases around the world. But anyone can buy one online through the Army & Air Force Exchange Service.

The Global card works like any other prepaid calling card, with one difference: Unlike domestic cards, which are based on minutes, the Global card is sold in "units." The denomination was created by the calling-card industry years ago to try to make it easier for consumers to deal with international rates. Those rates vary widely by country.

But for Americans accustomed to buying calling cards by the minute, the unit system can be confusing. For example, a 10-minute call from Afghanistan

to the USA will eat up 30 units (three units a minute). The same call from Iraq will also cost you 30 units — unless you use a handheld satellite phone, in which case it will cost you 90 units (nine units a minute). Calls from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, weigh in at a hefty 15 units a minute. Cost of a 10-minute call back to the USA: 150 units.

Elaine Rogers, president of the USO of Metropolitan Washington, says her group has received thousands of calling cards donated by Americans who want to support the troops. But many of the donated cards are of the 5-cents-a-minute variety, making them virtually useless to soldiers stationed overseas.

"What people don't realize is that those cards will run out before a soldier can even get to the operator," Rogers says. "That's why it's so important to get the right card."

The USO typically gives domestic calling cards to veterans' hospitals or other U.S.-based military facilities where they can be put to good use.

The agency has been distributing care packages stuffed with a range of donated items. AT&T has donated \$6 million in Global cards for inclusion in the packages. "It's the No. 1 requested item from the troops," Rogers says.

According to AT&T, soldiers spend more than 10 million minutes a month using the Global card. Even so, AT&T says its profit margins are minimal because the service is so costly to provide. "We basically break even," says Claudia Jones, an AT&T spokeswoman.

AT&T's entry into the Iraq war zone began in 2000. The Pentagon wanted to

enable soldiers to call friends and relatives from the battlefield. That had never been done before.

Soldiers have long been able to use satellite technology to make and receive personal calls overseas. But no one had ever tried to build the equivalent of a pay-phone center in the midst of a combat zone.

Even AT&T wasn't sure it could deliver. The carrier had previously installed calling centers in such war-torn areas as Bosnia and Afghanistan. But those areas had existing infrastructure to work with.

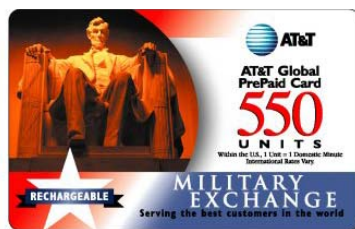
Iraq was different. The combat zone was basically leveled. AT&T assumed it would have no power lines and no infrastructure to work with. There would also be gunfire, unpredictable mortar attacks and broiling summer heat.

AT&T's solution: stand-alone calling centers.

The war-zone centers, which look like mobile homes, are self-contained. Each is outfitted with 24 to 48 phones, which look like regular pay phones. Each unit has its own satellite receiver, power generator and safety gear. The centers are air-conditioned, providing soldiers with a rare patch of privacy and comfort for making calls.

Getting the centers to the right location on the battlefield is a logistical feat. The electronics are assembled in the USA, then shipped to Kuwait. There, the centers are put together by technicians and loaded onto trucks. The trucks are then attached to military convoys for transport to their destination.

"If we're lucky, they get there," says Bill Baumann, AT&T's director of military marketing.



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Sometimes, they don't. Once, Baumann says, AT&T lost track of a phone center for about three weeks. It eventually turned up.

"It's a war zone," he says with a shrug. "Things happen."

Getting phone service into and out of the centers is also tricky. Each center contains a satellite dish that breaks down voice calls into bite-size digital pieces that can be picked up by a low-orbiting satellite.

The satellite transmits the signals to one of two receiving stations on the ground. One is in Germany, the other in Virginia. From there, the call is handed off to AT&T's global network, which whisks it along to its final destination. The entire process takes seconds.

Trying to maintain a top-notch phone center in a combat zone poses unique

challenges. Because the centers move along with the troops, technicians must constantly scramble to put them together and take them apart. "It requires a tremendous amount of coordination," Baumann says.

The natural elements are harsh. Heat, which is damaging to delicate electronics, is a constant problem in summer. Sand, highly corrosive to communications gear, is another threat. "It gets into everything and mucks things up," Baumann says.

Then there are the more obvious perils of trying to operate in a war: sniper attacks, mortar fire and the occasional hand grenade. Baumann sort of shrugs at that. It goes with the territory, he says.

Soldiers appreciate the convenience of being able to make calls from the

field. But if the news from back home isn't so good, well, that can sometimes be hard on the soldier as well as the phone.

On a couple of occasions, Baumann says, soldiers have used their M-16 rifles — the gun butt, not the other end — to vent their frustrations. "We try to build the phones to be as indestructible as possible," he says. "But every once in a while, we have to replace them."

Even so, he says, AT&T considers that a small price to pay for the privilege of serving America's fighting men and women. "For us," Baumann says, "this really is a major labor of love."

*By Leslie Cauley
USA Today*

From the 14 April 2005 issue of U.S. Air Force AIM Points

'Operation Purple' Summer Camp Registration Begins April 15

4/8/2005—WASHINGTON (AFPN) Registration for "Operation Purple" summer camps for children of deployed servicemembers begins April 15 on the National Military Family Association's Web site, program officials announced April 7.

The 22 Operation Purple camps provide summer camp experiences for more than 2,000 children whose parents are deployed in the U.S. armed forces. The camps are funded through a \$100 million commercial commitment aimed at strengthening families, homes and communities, officials said. The funding allows children to attend the camps free of charge.

Association officials said Operation Purple is the only summer camp program that focuses on helping children deal with deployment-related issues, and it is open to children of servicemembers from all branches of the U.S. armed forces.

Applications will be available online April 15 through May 15 at www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer.

The association developed Operation Purple camps in 2004 in response to the need for increased support services benefiting children of servicemembers,

especially those whose parents are or will be deployed, officials said.

In 2004, they conducted 12 camps, reaching nearly 1,000 children. This year, the program has expanded to more than 2,000 children. Officials estimate that more than 135,000 children are experiencing the absence of a parent because of a deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan, and still others have a parent deployed elsewhere.

"Operation Purple summer camps fulfill a critical need in the military community," said Candace Wheeler, the association's chief executive officer. "We have been overwhelmed by the messages of support and gratitude we've received from children, parents, the Department of Defense, the National Guard Bureau and members of Congress. We are thrilled to be able to expand the program this year."

The camps, which last five to seven days, give children ages 8 to 18 an ex-

citing and memorable camp experience, providing tools to help them deal with the stress resulting from a parent's deployment, officials said.

Program officials said military children are encouraged to apply for the camp located nearest their home. More than 30 weeks of Operation Purple camps are offered in 18 states, three

international locations and in Guam. They are in Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Germany, Italy and Japan. A list of camp dates, sites and other information is available on association's Web site.



Courtesy of American Forces Press Service

From Air Force Link, available online at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123010230>

DEFY: Drug Education for Youth Free Summer Camp

DEFY (Drug Education For Youth) is a multi-phased drug and violence prevention program. Its mission is to produce 9-12 year olds who have character, leadership, and confidence to engage in positive, healthy lifestyles as drug free citizens.

Phase I includes a 10-day non-residential camp with special presentations on communication skills, conflict resolution, self-esteem, self management skills, team building, physical fitness, impact of gangs and drugs, educational field trips, and much more.

Phase II will include a 10 month mentoring program during the school year to provide support, education, and direction to the youth.

Upon completion of the DEFY program the youth are placed in various positive programs.

Partners in this program will include the United States Attorney's Office, Scott Air Force Base, Drug Demand Reduction Program, and Illinois State Police.

Eligible youth are those whose parents work for the Department of Defense (active duty, retirees, reservists, national guard, civilians, and contractors).

Camp begins Monday, 11 July and ends Friday, 22 July 2005. There will be a "Family Day Fun Event" on the last day of camp.

If you are interested in having your youth participate in this program please complete the attached registration form and return to carrie.payne@scott.af.mil. Please hurry—only 40 children will be accepted. Parents/guardians will be notified of selection.

For more information, please contact Carrie Payne at 256-7534/7489.

REQUEST FOR DEFY APPLICATION

Please Print Youth's Name _____

Age _____ Date of Birth _____

Mailing Address _____

Street City Zip Code

Home Telephone Number _____

Parent and /or Guardian's Name _____

E-mail Address _____

Work Telephone Number _____

Cell Phone Number _____

Clip out and mail to:

Ms. Carrie Payne, Program Coordinator
375 MDOS/SGOHS
310 West Losey Street
Scott AFB, Illinois 62225-5252
618/256-7534

DEFY

Coupon Clipper Club at Family Services

Interested in saving money on your grocery bill? Family Services is collecting and sorting grocery coupons. They will then be available to the Scott community. We will have an



area set aside in our lobby to come and browse through the different categories of coupons. You are free to take the ones you can use and leave the ones you would like to share with others. The coupons that expire are sent to overseas bases, as they can use coupons up to six months from their expiration date.

We are located in Building 4141, the same building as the Airmen's Attic. We are open Monday through Friday from 10:00 am-2:00 pm. We will accept any coupons that you are not using. For more information, please call Family Services at 256-3616/3639.

USO Day at the St. Louis Zoo

The 1st Annual USO Day at the Zoo will take place on Sunday, 15 May from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Spend a fun-filled day with the animals.

The first 250 military members and their families (MUST show military ID) to arrive at the zoo will receive a free Safari Pass to check out all of the exciting exhibits, a Jungle Food coupon, and children will receive a special zoo water bottle (*one pass per person*). USO representatives will be at both entrances of the zoo.

For more information please contact Amber Powers at apowers@usostl.org or call the zoo at 1-800-966-8877.



Helpful Websites



Post Deployment Health: Family and Friends
<http://www.pdhealth.mil/family.asp>

PDHealth.mil was designed to assist clinicians in the delivery of post-deployment healthcare by fostering a trusting partnership between military men and women, veterans, their families, and their healthcare providers to ensure the highest quality care for those who make sacrifices in the world's most hazardous workplace.

We value the service of the men and women in the armed forces and the sacrifices their families make to support that service. For this reason, we created an entire section for family members. We provide a list of resources that are available to service members and their families. Many of these are available online, as well as by phone, with call centers ready to assist you 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Criteria for Making Morale Phone Calls

- The sponsor must be on remote status or will be TDY for 14 days or more. If the sponsor will be TDY for at least 14 days, a family member may register at any time before or during the TDY.
- Only one dependent adult family member may register. The registered family member must be the person who initiates telephone calls—through the switchboard operators—to the sponsor.
- The registered family member may place one call per week to the sponsor. Emergency calls may exceed this threshold.
- Calls must be limited to 15 minutes in duration.
- Calls must be initiated between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Monday through Friday or anytime on weekends and holidays.
- If any portion of the call incurs a monetary charge, the sponsor's family is responsible for paying that charge.
- Time and date of calls should be prearranged between family members and the sponsor whenever possible to prevent repeated attempts at completing the call.
- Some deployed locations do not accept incoming calls from family members. The Family Support Center will try to notify family members if this situation occurs, whenever possible.
- Scott AFB Base Operator (618) 256-1110.

Expeditionary Family Event Calendar for **May** 2005

Date	Event & Time	Location	Phone
3	Comm. Youth Transition & Education Council, 1:00 pm	375AW Conference Room	256-9595
10	Enlisted Spouses' Club Meeting, 7:00 pm	Hospital Dining Hall (basement)	233-4690
11	Officers' Spouses' Club Meeting, 10:30 am	Scott Club	746-4033
13	Give Parents a Break, 6:00-10:00 pm	Child Development Center & Youth Center	256-8668
15	USO Day at the Zoo, 11:00 am-1:00 pm	St. Louis Zoo	800-966-8877
16	Kids Klub, 5:00-7:00 pm	Scott Club	744-1333
17	Book Discussion Group, 6:30 pm	Library	256-5100
19	Key Spouse Meeting, 6:00 pm	Family Support Center	256-8668
21	Family Picnic, 11:00 am-1:00 pm	Family Support Center	256-8668

Note: Events in bold are specifically Expeditionary Family Events for families of deployed members

This newsletter is a product of the Scott AFB Integrated Delivery System (IDS) Team.
Find more helpful information online at <http://public.scott.amc.af.mil/review/integrated/index.cfm>.
